United Nations A/AC.198/2010/3

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2010

Original: English

Committee on Information
Thirty-second session
26 April-7 May 2010

Activities of the Department of Public Information: news services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The News and Media Division, which is responsible for implementing the subprogramme relating to news services, provides accurate, balanced and, where feasible, customized news and information materials and services, namely, radio, television, photographic, print and Internet, to media and other users globally, utilizing traditional media as well as new information and communications technologies to reach a global audience.

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 64/96 B, summarizes the key advances made by the Department from July 2009 to February 2010 in promoting the work of the United Nations through its news services.

10-24112 (E) 080310

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/96 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-first session and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities for the consideration of the Committee on Information at its thirty-second session. The Bureau of the Committee on Information, which met on 1 December 2009, advised the Department to present the requested information in three parts, in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communications services, news services and outreach services.

3. The present report discusses the media services provided by the Department of Public Information in such areas as United Nations Radio and Television, meetings coverage and press releases, the United Nations website, including the news portal, and services to the media. Unless otherwise indicated, the report covers the activities of the Department for the period from July 2009 to February 2010.

II. News services

4. Responding to the rapidly changing communications environment, the Department of Public Information worked to further capitalize on the synergies between the traditional and new media to find the most effective means of delivering its news-related products and services to an expanding global audience. To reach its overarching goal of providing timely, accurate and objective news and information about the United Nations to the media and the public at large, the Department made a concerted effort to solidify its partnerships with broadcasters and other media outlets, while at the same time using the Internet and social networks to bring its message directly to target audiences. In all of its activities, the Department continued to explore all available options to encourage the provision of the news and information in all the official languages of the United Nations.

5. Given the deadline-driven and technology-dependent nature of many of its products and services, the Department undertook measures to cope with the challenges presented by the widespread movement of its staff and offices as a result of the capital master plan, now in full swing. The Department worked closely with the relevant offices to ensure a smooth transition and uninterrupted delivery of live and on-demand coverage and other news-related materials and services to all of its audiences and clients. Within the context of the capital master plan, the Department continued to explore permanent arrangements for housing and protecting the complete collection of audio and visual archives under its stewardship, while also moving ahead with digitizing and classifying fragile materials documenting decades of United Nations history.

A. United Nations Radio

6. United Nations Radio continues to enhance its news and feature programming while using a combination of traditional and multimedia delivery platforms to expand its audiences around the world. A major effort remained focused on developing its network of broadcasting partners, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

7. As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the use of its programming by broadcasters, especially in the developing countries, United Nations Radio added a more flexible style of production, presentation and distribution by feeding interviews and raw audio to radio partners through their websites. This allows broadcasters to package United Nations Radio material in a manner that better fits their formats and programme schedules.

8. Since July 2009, nearly 60 broadcasters have been added to the list of media outlets receiving United Nations Radio material. Among the new additions are Juba Radio (Somalia) and Radio N'thiyana (Mozambique); Voice of Viet Nam; WYNE (United States of America); and Radio Quito (Ecuador) and Princesa FM (Brazil). Compared to 2008, there was a 47 per cent increase in the number of United Nations Radio's partners, who now total 368 in 126 countries.

9. Alongside its continuing work with traditional broadcasting outlets, United Nations Radio harnessed social media tools. It launched Twitter accounts for all language units and installed social bookmarking (Digg, Yahoo, Ping and Delicious) on United Nations Radio's online news articles. It also developed Facebook fan pages for the English, French, Russian and Spanish units. Exploring new multimedia formats, it began producing audio slideshows which drew the attention of United Nations Radio site visitors, with a French audio slideshow on the issue of violence against women attracting particularly keen interest.

10. United Nations Radio focused its news coverage on the priority issues of the Secretary-General and the Organization at large:[1]

(a) *Climate change*: This was widely covered by all language units, with the number of reports and features on the issue ranging from 50 to 180;

(b) *Observances and anniversaries*: A broad range of materials, including interviews, in-depth reports, features and audio slideshows, was devoted to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the International Day of Peace, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East;

(c) *Africa*: Weekly magazines were produced in English and French, in addition to daily reports in English, French, Portuguese and Kiswahili targeting the continent;

(d) *Youth*: United Nations Radio produced special programmes to mark International Youth Day, highlighting the participation of young people in the "We Must Disarm" campaign and in the struggle to stop human trafficking.

[1] For activities on priority areas carried out by the strategic communications services and outreach services, please see A/AC.198/2010/2 and 2010/4 respectively.

B. United Nations Television

11. With recent trends pointing to a steady growth of television viewing in all forms — from traditional broadcasting and cable and satellite models to the newest platforms of online and mobile video — the Department continued to enhance its television and video services and products. Its programming focused on priority themes on the United Nations agenda. With the United Nations efforts on climate change attracting keen media interest, one of the highlights of the period was United Nations Television's coverage of the Secretary-General's visit to the Arctic Rim. To expand the reach of video messages of the Secretary-General on major United Nations issues, United Nations Television incorporated relevant footage from the field. A special event to mark United Nations Television's sixtieth anniversary, featuring award-winning programmes and highlights of recent coverage, drew a large audience, including United Nations staff and resident correspondents.

12. *Live coverage*. Provision of daily broadcast-quality coverage of events and activities at United Nations Headquarters — from meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies to international conferences and press briefings — remains one of United Nations Television's vital services, bringing images of the United Nations at work to television screens around the globe. Ready-to-air coverage, which is closely monitored by resident correspondents and wire services, delivers feeds that are used by international broadcasters and television news agencies, including Reuters, Associated Press Television News (APTN) and the European Broadcast Union. As part of its daily service, United Nations Television offers a highlights package containing footage of newsworthy developments.

13. *Feature programming*. The Department continued to use its flagship television programmes to highlight a wide range of priority themes and issues on the United Nations agenda, including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, human rights, gender-based violence and food security.

14. *21st Century*, the monthly news-magazine programme, aired by over 50 broadcasters worldwide, garnered several awards in 2009, including best current affairs television documentary from the Association for International Broadcasting and best foreign short documentary at the Moondance Film Festival. A number of *21st Century* pieces also appeared on the websites of CNN and other major news providers.

15. For *UN in Action*, another award-winning programme, 35 pieces were produced between July 2009 and February 2010. Consisting of a series of short features, the programme is available in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

16. United Nations Television is also producing a weekly short feature story for CNN International's weekend news show, World View (formerly CNN World Report), which reaches 258 million households worldwide.

17. The regular *Year in Review* programme highlighting major United Nations events and issues in 2009 was produced and distributed to broadcasters around the world to meet their demand for end-of-year wrap-ups. The programme was made available in Arabic (subtitles), English, French, Russian and Spanish.

18. *United Nations Television Channel*. Since July 2009, United Nations Television has taken several important steps in its efforts to reach wider audiences

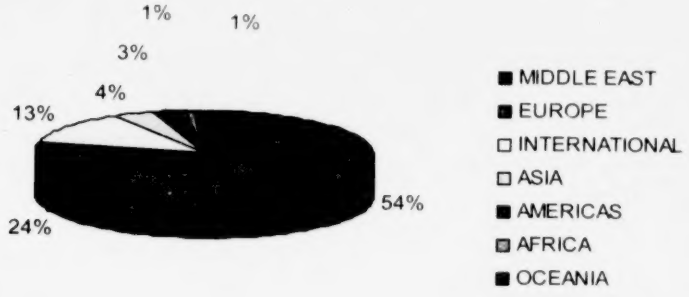
by exploring innovative arrangements with local cable operators and online television news services. Using the opportunity presented by the transition to digital television in the United States, United Nations Television worked closely with Time Warner Cable to ensure broader geographical reach for the United Nations Television channel, which can now be seen on channel 150 in almost 1.5 million households of the New York metropolitan area. In a parallel effort, the Department of Public Information reached an agreement to carry the United Nations Television channel with LiveStation.com, an online television news service aggregator that offers television news channels from global sources to its 1.5 million Web and mobile users.

19. *UNifeed*. Established in 2005 as an inter-agency platform to provide breaking news and feature stories from a single distribution point serving hundreds of major broadcasters in all regions of the world, UNifeed is transmitted from United Nations Headquarters in New York via satellite six days a week through APTN. Select stories are also distributed to Thompson-Reuters and Eurovision, with APTN alone reaching more than 1,000 broadcast points globally. From July to December 2009, United Nations Television was a top contributor to UNifeed, producing 37 per cent of its material. Over 40 United Nations agencies, funds, peacekeeping missions and other entities provide content to the service.

20. With the world media's attention riveted on the devastating earthquake in Haiti and the international community's response to it, the UNifeed video news service was an essential resource for many broadcasters. Within just one week of the deadly quake, UNifeed collaborated with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to produce 67 stories that were picked up a record 12,660 times by 309 broadcasters.

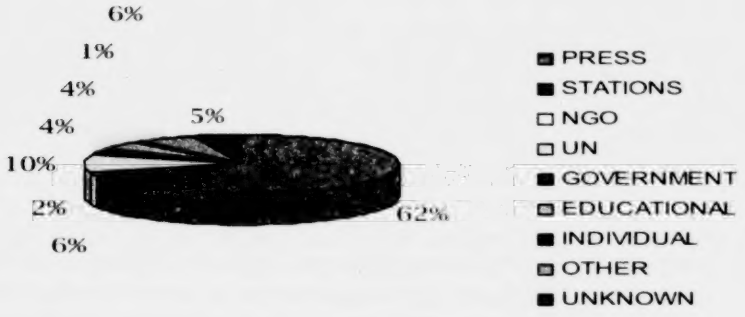
21. In terms of regional use, the Teletrax monitoring system shows that 54 per cent of the pickup of UNifeed stories from the satellite transmission was from the Middle East, a 20 per cent increase compared to the previous year. European broadcasters made up 24 per cent of the users while international broadcasters such as Al-Jazeera International, BBC Arabic and World, Voice of America, TV5, Deutsche Welle and CNN International stood at 13 per cent (see figure I).

Figure I
Pick-ups of UNifeed by region, July-December 2009



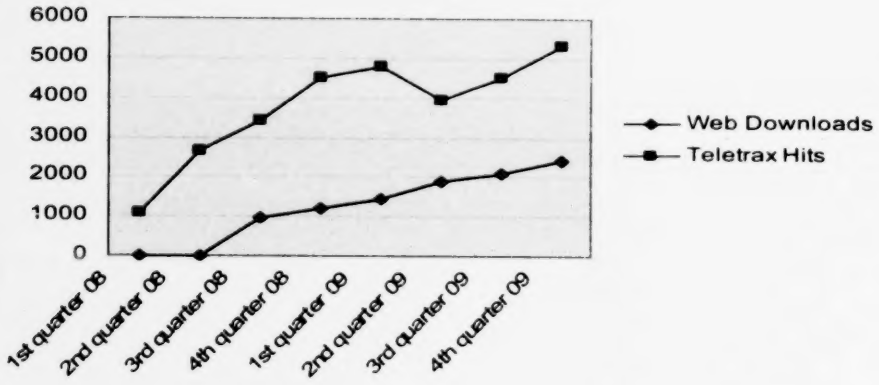
22. In 2009, UNifeed entered the second year of its online operation, which enables media outlets and other users to easily download broadcast-quality video in both NTSC and PAL versions. In an important service to the developing countries, the UNifeed website provides content for smaller broadcast outlets in Africa, Asia and Latin America that cannot access the APTN satellite. As figure II below shows, the UNifeed website is also expanding its outreach to non-governmental organizations, governmental agencies, educational institutions and individuals who rely on UNifeed for United Nations news content.

Figure II
Web downloads of UNifeed by category, July-December 2009



23. Since July 2009, all aspects of the UNifeed operation have shown substantial growth, including story production and distribution, both satellite and online (see figure III below). During the reporting period, UNifeed produced more than 600 stories. In the last quarter of 2009 alone, there were over 5,300 satellite pick-ups and more than 2,400 online downloads. In January 2010, downloads spiked in response to UNifeed's extensive coverage of the Haiti earthquake, totalling 661 during just one week in the quake's aftermath. According to Teletrax and Web data, there has been a 58 per cent increase in the use of UNifeed stories in the last year alone.

Figure III
Web downloads and Teletrax hits of UNifeed 2008-2009

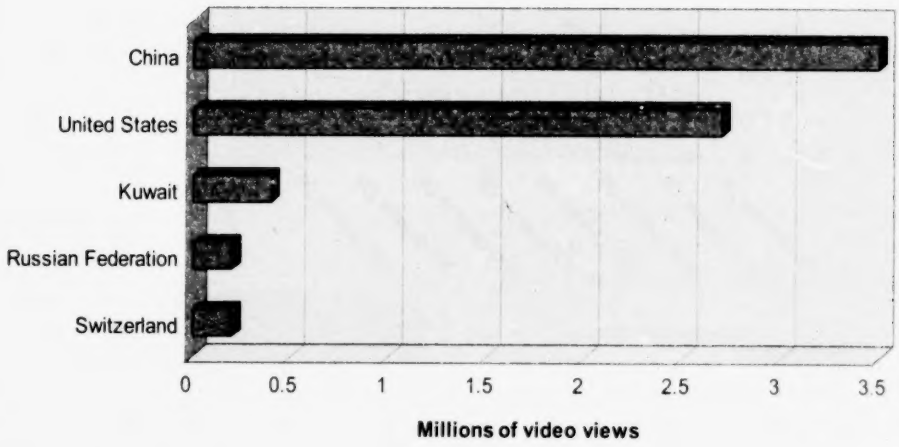


Webcasting

24. In response to the growing demand for live streaming and on-demand video services, the Department made full use of the synergies between United Nations Television's live coverage and new media. By helping viewers around the world to follow the meetings of the main United Nations bodies in real time, the United Nations Webcast contributes to the Department's key function of promoting a better understanding of the work of the Organization. From July 2009 through February 2010, the United Nations Webcast website registered over 11 million video views (live and on-demand) from users in over 200 countries and territories.

25. The advances in streaming media technology have enabled a growing number of users from developing countries with low Internet bandwidth connectivity to view live and on-demand webcast videos of United Nations meetings and events. As illustrated in figure IV below, the five countries with the highest numbers of video views (on-demand access) include both developing and developed nations.

Figure IV
On-demand video views from United Nations Webcast, July 2009-February 2010



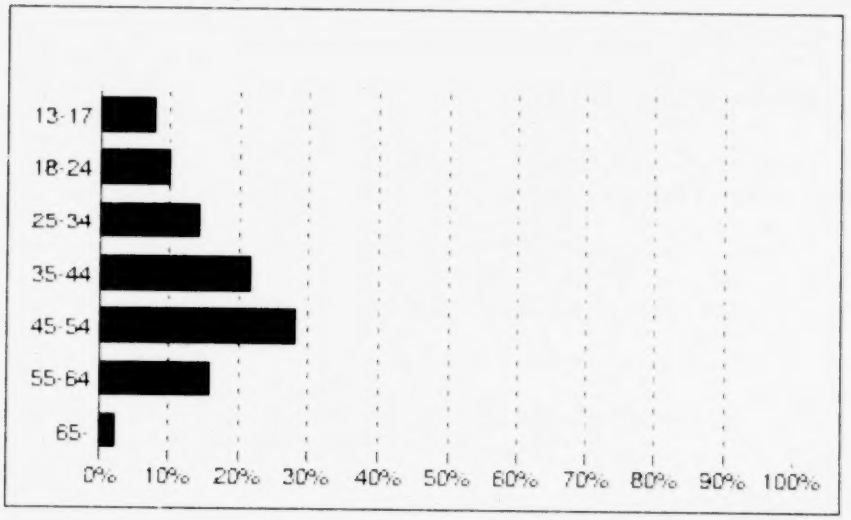
26. In addition to the live and on-demand webcast coverage of official meetings, press conferences and other events at Headquarters, the Department provided live streaming of a number of major events away from New York. Those included the Durban Review Conference; the High-level ECOSOC meeting held in Geneva; the Internet Governance Forum in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt; and the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in Nairobi. Furthermore, the Department continued to provide live and on-demand webcast coverage (speaker by speaker) of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

C. Promoting multimedia products

27. Creative repurposing of the content of its traditional media outlets for the Internet and reaching out to new audiences through a proactive use of new media remained a major thrust of the Department's activities during the period under review.

28. *United Nations Channel on YouTube*. The Department of Public Information continued to expand the range of material posted on the United Nations Channel on YouTube. In January 2010, over 1,000 videos were available for viewing on the Channel, with new content updated on a daily basis. The number of uploaded views exceeded 1.3 million and the ranks of its subscribers grew to over 5,000. To engage various groups, particularly youth, the Department created special video projects, including the "Citizen Ambassador to the United Nations" video contest which drew thousands of viewers. As figure V below shows, the Channel attracts interest from all age groups.

Figure V
Age distribution of viewers of the United Nations Channel on YouTube



29. In its efforts to further expand the distribution of its audio-visual materials, including high-resolution digital images, the Department took full advantage of its externally hosted online multimedia platform, which helped to overcome bandwidth limitations associated with multimedia products. In September 2009, users from 178 countries retrieved multimedia content from the site, including the Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Peace, which registered over 19,000 downloads in just one month.

30. The Department launched a redesigned photo page with improved navigation, user-friendly browsing and search functions and feature photo galleries. The page is powered by the Networked Interactive Content Access (NICA) system, which supports the entire digital life cycle of United Nations photos and helps the Department to offer its images to a wide range of internal and external users. At the same time, the Department continued to explore new distribution opportunities through social networking channels such as Flickr, Facebook, Twitter and others.

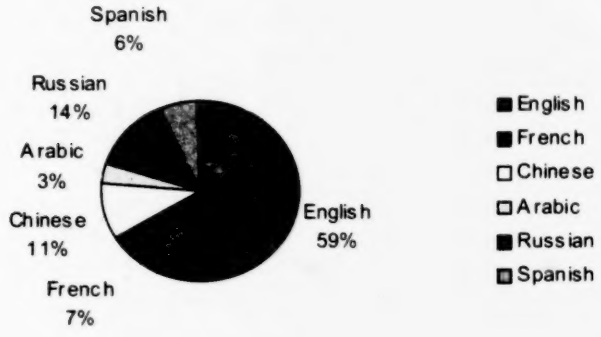
31. *Audio, video and photo libraries*. A significant part of the Department's activities was geared towards the preservation and maintenance of a unique and invaluable collection of audio-visual archives consisting of approximately 55,000 hours of film and video recordings, 80,000 hours of audio recordings and 800,000 photographs in both analog and digital formats documenting more than six decades of historic work by the Organization. These tasks took on special importance with the start of the capital master plan. To address the archival challenges in the context of the capital master plan, the Department completed a detailed technical inventory of the audio records, appraised their condition and selected the valuable subset for digitization. The complete collection of United Nations photo records (200,000 historic photographs in slides and negative formats) was digitized and ingested into NICA. Among other measures, a vast collection of historic photo outtakes in analog formats (slides, negatives, contact sheets and some prints) was transferred to the Archives and Records Management Service for safekeeping and preservation. The

digitization of United Nations Radio classics has enabled the continued online publishing of selected historic audio records from the 1940s to the present, including over 150 speeches, dramas and other radio programmes in the six official languages.

D. United Nations News Centre

32. The United Nations News Centre, one of the most popular segments of the United Nations website, continued to show a consistent pattern of growth in the number of visitors to all language versions of the portal, with spikes during peak news periods. In December 2009, the number of page views registered on all language versions of the site exceeded 12 million, representing a 31 per cent increase over the same month in the previous year. Figure VI below illustrates site usage by language.

Figure VI
United Nations News Centre: distribution of views by language, December 2009



33. In addition to garnering new visitors, the multilingual news portal remained a vital source of the latest news about the United Nations for a wide range of websites, from media outlets and news aggregators to websites of governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. Stories from the United Nations News Centre in Russian, for example, were consistently picked up by news agencies, radio stations, magazines and newspapers in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and other countries of the targeted region. Users from more than 90 nations regularly accessed the portal in Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish.

34. As work continued to resolve technical issues related to the redesign of all language versions of the News Centre, the recently revamped pages in English and French made wider use of new interactive, multimedia and database-driven features,

including on the special thematic News Focus pages. The recently introduced feature, Newsmaker, provided a valuable platform for senior United Nations officials to discuss their work in the context of major news developments. The series featured interviews with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, speaking on the eve of that country's presidential elections; the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), ahead of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. Following the Haiti earthquake in January 2010, the focus page on Haiti was quickly turned into a repository of key resources and links related to the United Nations system's response to the emergency.

E. Press releases

35. Providing fast, accurate and comprehensive coverage of all open intergovernmental meetings and press conferences at Headquarters and at other locations remains a crucial part of the Department's news-related services. Between July 2009 and January 2010, the Department's meetings-coverage operation produced a total of 2,764 press releases, with 14,492 pages in English and French, including end-of-year round-ups of Security Council and General Assembly actions. That output, made available in hard copy at Headquarters and distributed to worldwide audiences via the Internet and United Nations information centres, included:

(a) 432 press releases on meetings coverage summaries for the sixty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly, from mid-September to December 2009;

(b) 313 press releases on the Security Council, including a summit-level meeting on nuclear non-proliferation, and lengthy substantive debates on Afghanistan, the Middle East, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, the Sudan, the international criminal tribunals and women and peace and security;

(c) More than 1,100 press releases containing statements by and messages from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as material from other United Nations offices and departments. The total represented an almost twofold increase in volume over the previous period;

(d) 682 summaries of press briefings of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General and other press conferences held at Headquarters.

36. Given the importance of the Internet as a key distribution platform, the Department revamped the web page hosting its press releases and meetings coverage content to improve its layout, navigation and user-friendliness and to ensure visual coherence with other parts of the United Nations website. The redesign, which took into account recent feedback from Member States delegations and representatives of media and non-governmental organizations — key users of press release and meeting summaries — is part of an ongoing effort to enhance the site's database functionality and improve its search and browsing features.

III. Other services

A. Support to the media

37. From 1 July 2009 to 5 January 2010, the Department processed 925 permanent and 2,250 temporary press accreditations and distributed 132 media alerts to about 4,000 media organizations, press attachés of permanent missions and others in the United Nations system. The Department conducted 11 media tours for groups of students and professional journalists and provided information and logistics assistance for 297 media stake-outs. The Department also monitored 188 press conferences and briefings, which were attended by 5,108 journalists.

38. Among new initiatives aimed at facilitating media coverage of United Nations-related developments and issues, the Department disseminated to over 4,000 journalists a continuously updated list of United Nations officials who could be approached for interviews and appearances on television and radio shows in connection with the rescue and relief operation in Haiti. As an additional service to those journalists, the Department expanded the use of new media tools for the distribution of updated daily schedules of media events at Headquarters. In January 2010, its media alert was made available as a rich site summary feed, while a pilot project was launched to test the use of Twitter for schedule updates.

B. Placement of op-ed articles

39. The Department of Public Information continued to assist in the placement of opinion pieces by the Secretary-General and other senior United Nations officials in newspapers and other media outlets around the world. These articles discuss some of the most urgent challenges facing the United Nations and the broader international community, including nuclear disarmament, poverty and sustainable development. For example, in September 2009, the Department combined the efforts of its staff in New York and at United Nations information centres around the world to ensure global placement of the article entitled "The ice is melting" that detailed the Secretary-General's visit to the Arctic to see first-hand the effects of climate change. In January 2010, the Department's efforts resulted in the publication of an article "Haiti is not alone" in nearly 80 newspapers and other outlets in over 50 countries.

C. "Ten stories the world should hear more about"

40. The Department launched its sixth annual list of "Ten stories the world should hear more about" (available at www.un.org/en/events/tenstories/08/) with the aim of drawing greater media attention to underreported issues and developments that deserve increased exposure. The stories in the latest list focused on conflict and post-conflict situations (Central African Republic; Guatemala; Kosovo) and such issues as the protection of human rights, food security, crime prevention (cocaine trafficking in West Africa) and environmental concerns (space debris).

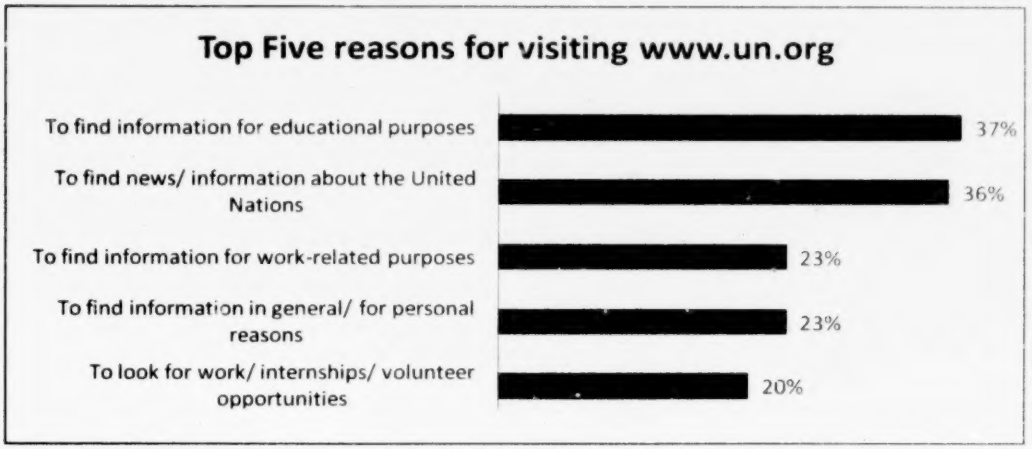
IV. The United Nations website

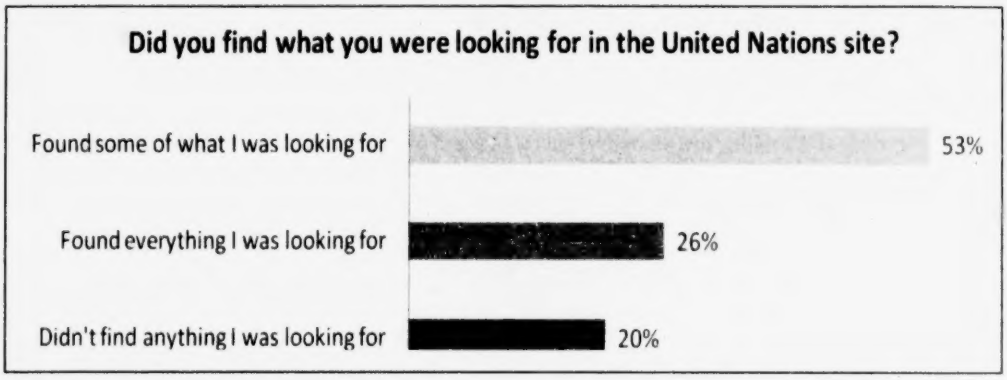
A. New look, improved coherence

41. Following the launch of the revamped home page of the website (www.un.org) in May 2009, the Department continued to upgrade the site while taking steps to evaluate its usage in the wake of a redesign that aimed to improve the site's organization, visual attractiveness, usability and cohesiveness. The home page redesign project, which was carried out in close coordination with all major content-providing offices of the Secretariat, introduced a common branding element for top layer pages across all languages. With these changes completed, the website has moved towards having a more coherent structure, a prerequisite for a content management system whose introduction has been anticipated for some time (see para. 51 below).

42. To establish benchmarks for further analysis, the Department conducted an online survey among site visitors who were asked questions that ranged from user demographics to issues of website functionality and ease of use. Part of the Department's annual programme impact review, the survey was posted on the website's home pages in six official languages. According to survey results, young people represent a significant proportion of the site's visitors: 31 per cent of respondents were under 21 years of age; 32 per cent were in the age group 22 to 34; 14 per cent fell into the 35 to 44 age group; and 13 per cent were in the age group 45 to 54. Among other findings, 53 per cent of the respondents found some of what they were looking for, and 26 per cent found everything they were looking for, 46 per cent read news stories and 20 per cent used the search function.

Figure VII
Selected results of online survey of United Nations website visitors


Top Five reasons for visiting www.un.org
To find information for educational purposes
37%
To find news/ information about the United Nations
36%
To find information for work-related purposes
23%
To find information in general/ for personal reasons
23%
To look for work/ internships/ volunteer opportunities
20%


Did you find what you were looking for in the United Nations site?
Found some of what I was looking for
53%
Found everything I was looking for
26%
Didn't find anything I was looking for
20%

B. Improving website analytics

43. As part of its overall focus on the improvement of evaluation mechanisms and feedback tracking, the Department has introduced a new system for website traffic analysis, Google Analytics. The required tracking code for Google Analytics has been installed in all new pages created as part of the revamping of the top layers of the United Nations website. This process is ongoing since the code must still be installed on the remainder of the website, which contains many thousands of pages. Because code installation is not yet complete, and the method of web traffic analysis has been changed, a year by year comparison of the entire website cannot be provided this year. The Department is in the process of evaluating an array of metrics indicators offered by the new system for possible use in traffic reporting and analysis; website data collected this year will serve as a benchmark in the future.

44. From June to December 2009, over 6 million visitors from over 200 countries and territories browsed through almost 30 million pages with embedded tracking code. Regionally, almost 28 per cent of the total traffic came from North America, 25.5 per cent from Europe, followed by South America and Central America with 18.2 per cent. Asia accounted for 17.3 per cent, Africa 6.17 per cent, and Australia approximately 2 per cent. Although Africa accounts for 6.17 per cent of total visitors to the United Nations website, Google Analytics data shows that of the 44 countries where the United Nations website ranks highest, 8 of the top 12 nations are in Africa.

C. Multilingualism and parity among languages

45. When providing Web services to author offices, the Department routinely emphasizes the need for site content to be made available in all six official languages, a requirement mandated by the General Assembly. Last year, the Department reported some progress in parity among official languages. With the growing use of the Internet for the dissemination of information and the push towards more environment-friendly electronic distribution, more and more content-providing offices are using this cost-effective medium for their communication and information dissemination purposes. Owing to this emphasis, the volume of material being created for the website by United Nations offices has been steadily increasing, with new content being posted in English only. Translation of that material, however, has not kept pace with the rapid speed of content generation by

departments and offices. If this trend continues, there is the likelihood that the gap in content availability between the English version of the website and the other language versions could increase.

46. In the past, calculations have been made to estimate the true cost of translating the entire contents of the current English website into the other five official languages, which was and continues to be considered impractical (see A/AC.198/1999/6, annex III). With gradual improvements in the accuracy of automatic translations and the possibility of combining machine translation with human revision, it is possible that in the near future, costs can be dramatically reduced and translations can be made available with greater speed. The Department of Public Information will work with the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management to make use of these opportunities when they are deemed to be suitable and practicable.

47. At the same time, the Department continues to benefit from the cooperative arrangements it has established with universities in Belarus, China and Spain that are allowing it to increase the number of Web pages available in other official languages.

48. To get a fuller picture of the recent trends in the use of the language versions of the site, the Department is combining analysis of traditional indicators, such as page views, with Google Analytics metrics, such as unique page views, which represent an aggregate of page views generated by the same user during the same session. The following table shows the breakdown by language for both metrics. It is important to point out that these numbers reflect only that portion of the website in which the new analytics tracking code has already been installed.

Unique pages viewed by language

		Per cent
Arabic	855	4.6
Chinese	1 071	5.8
English	5 081	27.3
French	2 713	14.6
Russian	1 236	6.6
Spanish	7 643	41.1
Total	**18 599**	**100.0**

Total pages viewed by language

		Per cent
Arabic	569 098	2.7
Chinese	1 045 252	4.9
English	11 862 461	55.4
French	2 040 066	9.5
Russian	810 278	3.8
Spanish	5 069 896	23.7
Total	**21 397 051**	**100.0**

49. An analysis of unique pages demonstrates a more even distribution of usage by languages as opposed to page views, where English accounts for more than half of the total. In another type of comparison, 5,081 different English pages were viewed 11,862,461 times, which works out to an average of each page being viewed about 2,334 times. On the French site, each of the different 2,713 pages was viewed about 752 times.

50. Building on the success of the coverage of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, the Department expanded the use of related content, including multimedia products, during the general debate at the sixty-fourth session. The United Nations website consolidated a number of the Department's outputs, including photos, text and video, and created a separate page for each of the participants in the debate, featuring a photo of the speaker taken by Department photographers, a video file produced by the United Nations Television and webcasting operations, a summary of the speech issued as a press release, and the full text of the statement posted online by a specially set up scanning operation. Several user-friendly features were added, including a ticker updated in real time to show the current speaker and an alphabetical listing of countries taking the floor, in addition to the meeting-by-meeting list. During the general debate at the sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly web page received almost a million page views.

D. Progress towards a content management system

51. The systematic and coordinated enhancement of the United Nations website requires a robust and secure content management system. The benefits that would accrue are highlighted in detail in section VI of the 2007 report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2007/3) and in section VII of the 2008 report (A/AC.198/2008/3). The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/262, had approved funding for enterprise content management, including the United Nations Internet site project. Accordingly, during the past biennium, the foundation was being laid for the United Nations website to move to the new system over the course of the next few years. Now that the General Assembly has decided to defer consideration of funding for the enterprise content management system to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budget, the Department is working with the Office of Information and Communications Technology in adapting its workplan to these circumstances and in making the best use of the current systems in place.

E. Towards improved web governance

52. The Department has worked closely with the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Office of Information and Communications Technology to link the implementation of a content management system with the adoption of a more robust governance system that will gradually put in place the policies and standards required for a new environment for web-page generation. The aim is to establish and promote a governance model that is rational, effective and enforceable as well as flexible enough to evolve in response to advances in technology.

53. As envisaged, the new web governance mechanism is designed to ensure that the United Nations has a coherent and consistent presence on the Internet despite the

fact that there are multiple content-providing offices with their own posting rights that have the primary responsibility for maintaining their own segments of the site. The overarching objective is to improve the site's organization and architecture, achieve a coherent United Nations "look and feel" without over-standardization; avoid duplication; and ensure cost-effectiveness in the use of platforms, technologies and applications needed for continuing website enhancement.

54. As noted in earlier reports (A/AC.198/2007/3, sect. VI and A/AC.198/2008/3, sect. VII), the Department had initiated steps to promote web governance, in part through the creation of a two-tier governance mechanism that includes the high-level Internet Steering Committee and an advisory Internet Governance Group, which replaces the Working Group on Internet Matters of the Publications Board. As requested by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, work was proceeding on amending the relevant Secretary-General's bulletins and administrative instructions to reflect those changes.

55. During the period under review, the Department once again took the initiative to assist in rationalizing the governance structure, particularly in light of the approval by the General Assembly of the information and communications strategy for the Secretariat (A/62/793 and Corr.1 and Add.1), the establishment of the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the creation of the high-level Information and Communications Technology Executive Committee. In view of the overlapping membership and mandates of the Internet Steering Committee and the subsequently created Information and Communications Technology Executive Committee, the Department has proposed a reassessment of the respective roles of the two bodies with a view to combining their functions to achieve greater efficiency, a process that is currently under way.

F. Accessibility of websites by disabled persons

56. With a view to making information about the United Nations and its activities available to the widest possible audience, and in keeping with the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Department of Public Information has continued to ensure that the United Nations website is accessible to persons with disabilities, including visual and hearing disabilities. New Web projects are designed to meet accessibility requirements, complying with the World Wide Web Consortium standards, which at present are the only standards with worldwide recognition and acceptance. The additional efforts necessary to create the new pages and to validate them against the standards have required additional production time, which has increased by at least 20 per cent.

57. While ensuring that newly created Web pages meet accessibility requirements, the Department also worked to address accessibility issues on older pages. Since the diagnosis and correction of accessibility barriers in existing pages is more time-consuming than the creation of accessibility compliant pages, the Department has been working to raise awareness of this issue and encourage the integration of accessibility requirements at the initiation of Web development projects.

58. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 61/106, requesting the Secretary-General to progressively implement standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system, the Department has developed technical standards to assist departments and offices across the

Secretariat in producing accessible Web content. These standards are available online at a specially created page (www.un.org/webaccessibility) that also features downloadable templates and validation procedures. On the basis of these standards, the Department has provided advice and expertise to departments, offices and other entities across the United Nations system, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund. These standards will be promulgated through the relevant Internet governance mechanisms, including the Internet Governance Group.

V. Conclusions

59. **The Department of Public Information has broadened its range of information products and introduced innovations in its distribution methods to harness the power of new media in reaching the broadest possible audiences in developing and developed countries alike. Creatively repackaging and repurposing its materials to be accessible through traditional means of communications — print, radio and television — and new media, including social networks and other evolving platforms, the Department has been able to maximize its outreach, especially among the youth and urban groups, and to continue disseminating information to those who have no or very limited access to the Internet.**

60. **By building on its existing strengths, embracing technological innovations and finding ways to further engage with external partners and other United Nations system entities, the Department of Public Information has been able to increase its productivity, improve the speed of delivery of its products and services and bring innovation and variety to its work. The Department has put special emphasis on improving the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to gauge the use of its products — online or broadcast — and ensure that they respond to the needs of their target audiences and clients.**

61. **While the Department made every effort to enhance the multilingualism of the United Nations website, it continued to face challenges stemming from the fact that much of the Web content generated by author departments and offices was posted on the website in English only. If this trend continues, it is likely that the gap in content availability between English and the other official languages will increase. While an enterprise-wide content management system would improve the security and consistency of the United Nations website, it is currently on hold owing to the General Assembly's decision to defer consideration of funding to the 2012-2013 proposed programme budget. The Department is working with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to adapt its workplan so as to ensure that the most robust and secure arrangements are in place within the existing system.**